

## Kline Introduces Bill to Support Victims of Sexual Assault in MN National Guard

Washington, Jun 12

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WASHINGTON – Minnesota Congressman John Kline introduced legislation, the National Guard and Reserve Equal Access to Legal Services Act (H.R. 4863), that would address an important discrepancy in legal services for victims of sexual assault in the National Guard and Reserve.

*“Both the active and reserve components of our military serve a unique mission in the defense of our country, but we can all agree there must be no disparity in services when it comes to helping the victims of sexual assault,”* said Kline, a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps whose wife is a retired Army nurse and son has served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. *“Our sons and daughters in uniform are sacrificing a great deal to protect our freedoms. We must address the issue of sexual assault in the military, and I am pleased to introduce this important legislation to provide members of our National Guard and Reserve access to important legal resources in the aftermath of a sexual assault.”*

Under current policy, a member of the Minnesota National Guard who was sexually assaulted while not on their drill weekend or military duty cannot access critical Special Victims Counsel (SVC) services. An SVC provides legal advice and helps victims to come forward knowing they will have assistance throughout the process.

Maj. Gen. Rick Nash, the Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard, said “the Minnesota National Guard is focused on preventing sexual assault. A full-time ‘Special Victim Counsel’ is an essential resource for victims on active duty, and the same legal service should be available for members of the National Guard.”

Kline has also met by phone with Sec. of the Army, John McHugh, to convey that the men and women serving in the Minnesota National Guard should have access to critical services following an assault.

Additionally, earlier this week, Kline worked alongside Senator Klobuchar to lead the Minnesota Congressional delegation in calling on the Army to ensure the Minnesota National Guard has access to SVC services in order to fully assist victims of sexual assault.

Congressman John Kline serves on the House Armed Services Committee. He also serves as the Chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee. He and his wife, Vicky, live in Burnsville.